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THE

VILLAGE LAWYER:

A Farce,

IN TWO ACTS.

As performed at the

NEW-YORK THEATRE.

NEW-YORK:

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Scout, *the village lawyer,*	*Mr. Harwood*
Snarl, *a rich old mercer,*	*Mr. West*
Charles, *son to Snarl,*	*Mr. Lindsley*
Justice Mittimus, *a justice,*	*Mr. Shafter*
Countryman,	*Mr. Chambers*
Constables	
Sheepface, *a shepherd,*	*Mr. Twaits*
Kate, *wife to Sheepface,*	*Miss White*
Mrs. Scout, *the lawyer's wife,*	*Mrs. Oldmixon*

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THE

VILLAGE LAWYER.

ACT I.

SCENE I—*a rural prospect.*

enter SCOUT *and mrs.* SCOUT.

Scout. Nay, nay good wife not so loud, or I vanish. Five and twenty years have I exposed my organs of hearing (ay, and though I say it, without whining too) to the encounter of the toughest lungs in Westminster hall, with no worse effect as yet, than a moderate deafness of the left ear; and a whizzing from time to time in the right, but that dear lovely, indefatigable tongue of thine, so far outdins the bar itself, that though a lawyer——

Mrs. S. A lawyer! why in that trim you look more like a client, than a lawyer, and no one, to see you in such a dress, would imagine you had ever carried on a suit, in any one's name but your own. Out upon you, you are a disgrace to the profession, and had you a grain of spirit——

Scout Spirit! oh, there at least you wrong me, and I defy any practitioner of twice my standing to

produce more instances of spirit, than I have; who exposes himself to the displeasure of the judges; or the censure of the courts. Show me the man that sets the pedantic regulations of common practice more at defiance than I have done; hav'n't I been obliged to quit the London courts only for displaying too much spirit on a certain occasion?

Mrs. S. Very fine truly! and do you boast of your blunders, and make a merit of your disgrace?

Scout. This accident to be sure forces me to try my talents in the obscurity of rural practice; and yet since our removal to this village, though next door to justice Mittimus, the best accustomed magistrate in the whole country, no favorable opportunity has offered; not a hare has been snared; or a head broke, or (what is stranger still) a single bastard born, though we have been here a whole fortnight, nay the very cattle keep out of pound, to spite me. But come have a little patience, times will mend.

Mrs. S. And in the mean time, your wife is to starve, and your daughter to lose the opportunity of settling herself in the world, by a match with one or other of the young men, who court her, and whom the poverty of your appearance frighten away.

Scout. Why to say the truth there is nothing in my dress that can bring either lovers to my daughter, or clients to myself. Mankind is governed by show, and the surest way to obtain the countenance of the world is never to appear to want it. Could I but once put on the appearance of business, the reality perhaps would soon follow, let me see—couldn't I—yes I have it—I'll go, and purchase me a handsome suit of clothes immediately.

Mrs. S. A handsome suit of clothes! what, without a farthing in your pocket?

Scout. Why not?—in London all your handsome suits are purchased the same way. What color shall I choose? bats-wing—or——

Mrs. S. Oh no matter for the color if you can find any one kind enough to trust you with the clothes.

Scout. Then to lose no time, I'll step over the way to the rich drapers, my neighbor Snarl's.

Mrs. S. To neighbor Snarl's! have a care what you do there. You know his son Charles is in love with our Harriet, and would have married her before now, but for fear of his father; I would not for the world you should do any thing to overthrow my daughter's hopes.

Scout. Never fear, step in and fetch my hat and gown. [*exit mrs.* S. I have just time to slip it on; it will give me a more creditable appearance before old Snarl, and these rags of mine into the bargain.

enter mrs. SCOUT, *with gown and hat.*

Ay, this will do. How many sleek, spruce, demure looking gowns are there in the world, as well as this, good for nothing else, but covering things not fit to be seen. [*exeunt*

SCENE II—Snarl's *shop, day-book, pen and ink, cloth on counter.*

enter SNARL *and* CHARLES.

Snarl. Well son, I ordered you to inquire me

out a shepherd instead of that dog Sheepface ; didn't I ?

Char. Why surely father, you have no fault to find with Sheepface.

Snarl. No ; only that he is a thief ! an arrant thief !

Char. I always found Sheepface a very faithful servant.

Snarl. To *you* he may, but not to *me ;* he has been but a month in my service, and there are fourteen of my wethers missing, now it is impossible so great a number in so short a time could die of the rot, as he says.

Char. You dont consider what a havoc a disorder sometimes makes.

Snarl. With the help of a doctor, I grant you, but my sheep had no doctor, poor things ! yet they could not have made more haste if they had been prescribed for, by the whole faculty. As for that dog, Sheepface, I have suspected him for sometime ; but last night I caught him in the fact, and this morning I mean to bring him before justice Mittimus ; but first of all, I must know exactly, what's my loss. Reach me the account of the flock. *(sits down)* And if neighbor Gripe, the constable inquires for me, send him this way.

enter SHEEPFACE.

Char. (aside to Sheepface) Sheepface, all's out I find, father's confoundedly angry, try what you can do to soften it, but beware of speaking. [*exit*

Snarl. Let me see ;—"bought of farmer Clod."

Sheep. Save your good worship, sweet master Snarl.

Snarl. How, villain, have you the impudence to appear in my sight, after the tricks you have played me.

Sheep. Only to tell your sweet worship, that neighbor Gripe has been talking to me about sheep-stealing, and justice Mittimus, and your worship, and a power of things, and so I said I wouldn't make a secret of it to my good master's worship any longer.

Snarl. Your affected innocence, shan't save you, you rascal ; didn't I catch you last night killing one of the fattest of my wethers.

Sheep. Only to keep it from dying.

Snarl. Kill it, to keep it from dying !

Sheep. Of the rot, an' please your worship. It's a secret I learnt from the doctor in our town. He cured most of his patients the same way.

Snarl. The doctor, rascal ! the doctor has a license to kill from the college.——Such sheep as mine too—there was not in all England, such another breed for spanish wool.

Sheep. Be satisfied your worship with the blows you gave me, and let's make up matters, if it's your worship's sweet will and pleasure.

Snarl. My will and pleasure is to hang you, rascal, to hang you.

Sheep. Consider, your worship, I was married but yesterday, leave me to myself a week or two, and who knows but I may save you the trouble.

Snarl. No, rascal, the gallows is the quickest remedy of the two, and every bit as sure as t'other.

Sheep Heaven give you good luck of it then, if it must be so, sweet master Snarl, I must go look for a lawyer, I see, or *might* will overcome

right Oh dear, that an honest man should be treated so, only for killing a few sheep to save 'em from dying. [*exit*

Snarl. (sitting down) A dog! but he shall pay for this. Let me see—two, and two are four——

enter SCOUT.

Scout. The coast is clear at last—now or never.

Snarl And seven—no, nine——

Scout. (aside) Yonder's a piece of cloth now would suit me to a hair Give me leave sir, to—

Snarl. Who's there? Gripe I suppose. Wait a moment, honest Gripe.

Scout. I am lawyer Scout, your neighbor——I am come to——

Snarl. I am lawyer Scout, my neighbor's very humble servant; but he and I have no business together, that I know of,—"carried over'——

Scout. You'll have another story to tell to-morrow, or I'm much mistaken *(aside)*—I find sir, upon looking over my late father's papers, an account of a debt left unpaid, and I am come——

Snarl. It's no business of mine; I owe no man a farthing.

Scout. I wish I could say as much for myself; but find that *my* father was indebted to *yours* in a small balance of 50 pounds, and as a man of honor I am come home to pay it you.

Snarl (rising) My dear sir, ten thousand pardons, for my forgetfulness. I recollect you perfectly now. Yes, you lived in the next village, and you and I were sworn comrades formerly. Pray sir, be seated, *(hands a chair)*

Scout. Dear sir, if those who are indebted to me,

had a little of my punctuality, I should be a richer man than I am, but to have my name in any one's book is a thing I can't bear.

Snarl. And yet the generality of people bear it very patiently.

Scout. I am upon thorns in a manner, while I owe one a farthing, and for that reason I am come to know when you'll be at leisure to receive the money.

Snarl. No time like the present.

Scout. True, I have it at home, ready told; but as I have the management of my father's effects, only as guardian for my daughter Harriet, it's proper that the other guardians should be by at the payment.

Snarl. Very true, sir, then what do you think of to-morrow at three o'clock?

Scout. With all my heart, but I have interrupted you perhaps. *(rises)* Why sir, you do more business than all the shopkeepers in this part of the country put together.

Snarl. I can't complain.

Scout. No, you have such a way with you, that those who buy once, can't for the blood of them, help coming to you again. A pretty bit of cloth this——

Snarl. Very pretty.

Scout One meets in your shop, such a generosity of treatment, a politeness of behavior, that makes it pleasanter to *pay* money to you than to receive it elsewhere. The wool seems tolerably fine.

Snarl. Right spanish wool every hair of it, sir.

Scout. So I thought; now we talk of spanish

wool. if I am not mistaken, mr. Snarl, you and I went to school together formerly.

Snarl What, to old Ironfist ?

Scout. The same ; you were a very handsome youth I remember.

Snarl. So my mother always said.

Scout. Egad, for old acquaintance sake, you and I must eat a bit of dinner together to-day. I have a fine goose at home, that a client sent me from Norfolk.

Snarl Goose ! that's my favorite dish.

Scout. And my wife shall dress it by a family receipt. It's a treasure, that receipt's a perfect treasure. Her uncle, the late alderman Dumpling, passed through the whole circle of corporation honors, and died mayor by virtue of that receipt

Snarl. Ay ! ay !

Scout. Then mrs. Scout will be happy to see you : now I think on't, I promised her, that you should have my custom for the future, and to make a beginning I dont care if I have the pattern of a suit of clothes from you now.

Snarl Very happy to accommodate you, sir ; what color would you choose ?

Scout. Color ! why here's a pretty one enough to my mind, sir.

Snarl. Very pretty indeed, sir ; it's an iron grey. Shall I cut off the quantity you want, to have it ready ?

Scout. To have it ready ; no, mr. Snarl, pay as you go that's my rule ; pay as you go.

Snarl. Ecod an excellent rule it is.

Scout. Do you remember, mr. Snarl, the even-

ing we were together at the goose and gridiron ?

Snarl. What, the evening I so roasted our curate.

Scout. The same ; you were very severe on him. You had a world of wit.—Pray what must I pay you a yard for this cloth ?

Snarl. Why, sir, another should pay me nineteen and sixpence ; but come, you shall have it at nineteen shillings—now I think of it. Here's your quantity ready cut.

Scout. Ready cut—that's lucky indeed. (*snatches up the cloth*)

Snarl. Stop a moment, till I measure it before you.

Scout. O fie ! do you think I have any doubt of you.

Snarl. But the price——

Scout. Poo, I never haggle with a friend ; I leave all that to you. Good day.

Snarl. Let my shopman carry it over, and bring back——

Scout. No, no, dont take him from business. It is but a step you know, and I'd carry it twice as far to oblige you. Compliments to mrs. Snarl ; —good bye to you, good bye. [*exit.* Snarl *follows*

SCENE III—Scout's *house.*

enter KATE *and* SHEEPFACE.

Kate. Lookye, if you want a lawyer to bring you out of a scrape, my master's the man for your money.

Sheep. I know it, he stood my friend once when brother and I were put to trouble ;—would you believe it only for mending the complexion of a

bald-faced horse—but I have such a treacherous memory, I dont know how it came about, but some how or other I forgot to pay him.

Kate. He'll not think of that perhaps: at any rate take care not to tell him who the plaintiff is; for I know he would not on any account be concerned against mr. Snarl.

Sheep. I'll only tell him of my master, without mentioning any name; and he'll think I mean the farmer I lived with, when I courted you first.

Kate. Do so, here he comes. [*exit*

enter SCOUT.

Scout. Sure I should know that face, I think—yes, the same. Harkye, didn't I save you and your brother from being hanged some time since at York.

Sheep. Yes, your worship, yes.

Scout. By the same token, one of you forgot to pay me.

Sheep. Yes, that was brother.

Scout. The other was sick at the trial, and died sometime after in prison.

Sheep. That was not I.

Scout. So I see.

Sheep. For all that I was sicker nor brother! and so as I was saying, I am come to beg of your worship to speak for me before the justice against his worship my master

Scout. What the great farmer in the neighborhood?

Sheep. He lives in the neighborhood sure enough, and your worship shall be paid to your heart's content.

Scout. Let me hear your case, and be sure you tell it without disguise.

Sheep. You must know then, an' please your worship, my master gives me but little wages, very small wages, indeed; and so to make amends for that without doing him any damage, I thought as how I d best do a little business on my account with a worthy neighbor, a butcher by trade.

Scout. And what kind of business do you carry on?

Sheep. Under favor, I hinder sheep from dying of the rot.

Scout. There's no harm in that; how do you contrive——

Sheep. Please your worship, I cut their throats before they have time to catch it.

Scout. A very effectual remedy truly; and your master perhaps is unreasonable enough to say you do so only to sell the carcasses, and keep the money to yourself?

Sheep. Yes, your worship, and I can't bear it out of his head, because last night he saw me—I mean —I—must I tell the truth?

Scout. Yes, tell the truth here, or how shall we be able to lie to any purpose elsewhere.

Sheep. The truth of the matter then is, that last night, after I was married, having a little leisure time upon my hands, I took a walk as far as our pens, and there as I was musing on I dont know what;—out I takes my knife, and so happening by mere accident to put it, craving your worship's pardon, under the throat of a fat wether, I dont know how it came about, but it was not long there before the wether died all of a sudden as a body may say.

Scout. And there was somebody looking on, the whole time, eh!

Sheep. Yes master, from behind the hedge, and so he will have it that fourteen wethers, which I sav'd from catching the rot, died all along of me. And so as your worship may see, he laid such a shower of blows upon me as put the bride out of temper the whole night; but I hope your worship will stand my friend, and not let me lose the fruits of my honest industry all at once.

Scout. I understand you; there are two ways of proceeding in this affair; the first won't put you to a farthing of expense.

Sheep. Let's try that by all means.

Scout. With all my heart;——you have scrap'd up something handsome in the course of your practice on your master's sheep.

Sheep. Heaven knows I have been up late and early for it.

Scout. Your savings are all in hard cash, I suppose.

Sheep. Yes, your worship.

Scout. You must hide the whole sum immediately in the safest place you can think of.

Sheep. That I will, without fail.

Scout. Your master will be obliged to pay all costs and charges.

Sheep. So he ought; he can afford it.

Scout. And without a penny out of your pocket.

Sheep. Just as I would have it.

Scout. He'll be put to the trouble of having you hang'd.

Sheep. Zounds, let us try the other way first.

Scout. Well then you are to be brought before justice Mittimus.

Sheep. So I am told.

Scout. Take notice of this.

Sheep. Never fear me.

Scout. To every question, ask'd you, either by the court, the plaintiff, lawyer, or myself, make no reply but in the language of your own *ewes* when they call their lambs ; you can speak that language, can't you ?

Sheep. Its my mother tongue.

Scout. The blows you have received on your head, have suggested a scheme which assisted by Mittimus's credulity may perhaps save you : but I expect to be well paid.

Sheep. That you shall as I am an honest man ; good-day your worship. Lord, lord ! what troubles we poor folks have to keep our own in this world. Your servant your worship ; I shall remember.— Baa, baa, baa. [*exit*

Scout. So if the contrivance I have thought of to elude my neighbor's demand, does not succeed ; the money I get from this new client may stop his mouth perhaps. *exit*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I—*rural prospect.*

enter SNARL.

Snarl. This is a very busy day with me ; I am to receive different sums of money from my worthy neighbor lawyer Scout and to eat a goose with him, dress'd after a receipt of the late worshipful alder-

man Dumpling. Well, I always said the aldermen were a useful body of men. But suppose I call in to see how matters stand, by way of asking how he does; here's a savory smell. Egad they have put down the goose already. I'll go and have a sop in the pan. [*exit*

SCENE II—*a room in* Scout's *house.*

enter SCOUT *and* WIFE.

Scout Quick, quick, old Snarl is coming up; I hear him on the stairs. Now mind your cue, wife.

Mrs. S. Never fear me; I'll be a good nurse, I warrant me.

enter SNARL.

Scout. (in a chair as sick) Wi-f-e here's the apo-the-cary.

Snarl. The apothecary!

Scout. He brings me the cooling mixture.

Snarl. The cooling mixture.

Mrs. S. O dear sir, I hope you have brought something to give my poor husband a little ease. He has been in the condition you see this fortnight past.

Snarl. This fortnight woman, why——

Mrs S. Yes, this day fortnight, of all the good days in the year, he was taken with a lunacy fit, and has not been out of the room since.

Snarl. Zounds not out of the room; why he came to my house this morning by the same token he bought four yards of iron grey cloth of me, and I am come for the money. Good morrow, mr. Scout.

Scout. Good morrow, good mr. Drench.

Snarl. Mr. Drench

Mrs. S He takes you for the apothecary sir, pray leave the room for heaven's sake, if you can give him no relief.

Snarl. But patience ; you remember mr. Scout, this morning——

Scout. Yes, this morning, I bid my wife lay by for you——

Snarl. Ay, I knew he would remember it.

Scout. I bid her lay by for you carefully, a large glass full of my——

Snarl. A glass full ! I am come for my money. Zounds is that the coin I am to be paid in.

Mrs. S. Dear sir, retire.

Snarl. When I am paid, and not before.

Scout. I beseech you let me have no more of these odious pills ; the had like to have made me give up the ghost.

Snarl. I wish they had made you give up my cloth.

Scout. (rising) Wife, see, see, three large buzzing butterflies with amber heads, and chrystal wings——there they go—there——tally o ! hoics, hoics, tally o ! ho, ho !

Snarl. I see none of them.

Mrs. S But you see he raves.

Scout. (falling back in chair) Save me good folks from the doctor, and a fig for the disease.

Snarl. O he talks good sense now—now I'll speak to him—neighbor Scout.

Scout (jumping up) My client, my lord, sir Hugh Witherington !

Snarl. Sir Hugh Witherington !

Scout Charges the defendant sir Hugh Montgomery——

Snarl. Gomery! why is it possible I could have mistaken another for him.

Mrs. S. Nay now you have tormented the poor man sufficiently, let him have a little rest.

Snarl. Stay, he looks as if he would speak to me.

Scout. O dear mr. Snarl.

Snarl. He knows me; I said so.

Scout. I beg ten thousand pardons.

Snarl. No apologies—well.——

Scout. That since my arrival in this village, I haven't been to see you.

Snarl. Not been to see me! why this very day you know——

Scout. Yes, to-day, to make my excuses, I sent an attorney of my acquaintance.

Snarl. An attorney! eh, shall I never see my cloth again? but it's all a sham, you yourself was the very person, by the same token your father owed mine fifty pounds: ay, ay, you may shake your head, but I shan't quit the place, without either my cloth or my money.

Scout. This won't do, I find, I must try another method. (*aside*) Wife, wife, dont you hear them? the thieves are breaking in at the door—but I'll bite 'em—this way—here they come—my musket—I'll shoot 'em. Stop thief! stop thief!—(*collars* Snarl) my musket, my musket! [*exit*

Snarl. A thief! my musket, ecod, it may be dangerous, to argue with a madman, and a blunder buss.

re-enter SCOUT, *with a birch broom, which he levels at* SNARL, *who supposing it a musket, scrambles off crying out*

O lord! o dear!

Scout. Ha, ha, ha! he's gone at last.

Mrs. S. Yes, yes, he's gone. You have no further occasion for me; but stay you here for fear of his return. [*exit*

Scout So, I have got a reprieve for some time at least; here he comes again: stop thief—stop thief—stop thief——o it's my new client.

enter SHEEPFACE.

Sheep. At your worship's service, justice Mittimus is ready, and the court will sit immediately

Scout. Wait till I put on my gown, and be sure you remember the instructions I gave you.

Sheep. Never fear, your worship: baa; practice makes perfect, they say.

Scout This way; we have no time to lose.

Sheep. I have been improving myself this half hour past, in our pens, and now I am so fluent in talking like a sheep, that I question if his worship, and the whole bench together could beat me at it. [*exeunt*

SCENE III—*the court at the justice's—table, five chairs, clerk, &c. discovered.*

MITTIMUS, *two* JUSTICES, *and* SNARL.

Mit. Well, the court is assembled; and the par-

ties may appear. Where is your lawyer, neighbor Snarl?

Snarl. I am my own lawyer.

enter SCOUT, SHEEPFACE, *and* CONSTABLES.

Scout. (aside to Sheepface) How, rascal, you have imposed upon me. Is that the plaintiff?

Sheep. Yes, that's his worship, my good master.

Scout. (aside) How shall I get out of this scrape?—if I go off, it will rouse his suspicions; I'll e'en stay and outface him.

Snarl. (seeing Scout) Hey-day, who have we here? the very fellow as I live.

Mit. Neighbor Snarl, you are the plaintiff begin—

Snarl. Then you must know that this thief——

Mit. Come, come, no abuse

Snarl. The short and the long of it then is that this scoundrel, shepherd of mine that was, has robbed me of fourteen wethers.

Scout. That remains to be proved.

Snarl. (aside) His voice, by Jupiter.

Mit. What proof have you?

Snarl. Proof—why I—I sold them this morning—no I dont mean that—I gave him in charge four yards—no I dont mean that—fourscore sheep, I should say, and there are but threescore and six forthcoming.

Scout. I deny the fact.

Snarl. Well, if I had not left the other in a lunacy fit I should swear this was the very man.

Mit. This is the very man, without doubt——

but that is not the point at present——the fact, neighbor Snarl—prove the fact.

Snarl. I prove it by my oath——I mean by the count of my flock;—what's become of the four yards—fourteen sheep, I should say, that are missing?

Scout. They are dead of the rot.

Snarl. Zounds! tis he himself.

Mit. Again, why I tell you once more, neighbor, nobody doubts that. It is asserted that your sheep died of the rot. What do you answer to that?

Snarl. I answer that it is a confounded lie, and the proof on't is I was hiding behind the hedge, when who should come up but this fellow, and laying hold of one of the fattest of my wethers——sits down beside me, and after cajoling me for awhile about Witherington, Gomery, he makes no more ado, but carries off four yards of it.

Mit. Four yards of your wethers!

Snarl. Eh, no—my cloth—I say my cloth——the other——

Mit. What other, neighbor—what other?

Scout. Dear sir, he's mad—raving mad.

Mit. I fear so—harkye, neighbor Snarl; not all the justices in the county, no nor their clerks either, could make any thing of your evidence. You talk of fourteen wethers stole from you, and you jumble up with that four yards of cloth, and Wittington, and I dont know what.—Stick to your wethers, I say, or I must discharge the prisoner;—but the shortest way is to examine him myself.—Come here, my good fellow—hold up your head; what is your name?

Sheep. Baa.

Snarl. He lies ; his name is Sheepface.

Mit. Well, Sheepface, or Baa, no matter for the name ; tell me, is it true that mr. Snarl gave you fourscore sheep in charge ?

Sheep. Baa.

Mit. How ! oh, his fears get the better of him perhaps; come, come, dont be alarmed—did mr. Snarl catch you at night killing one of his wethers ?

Sheep. Baa.

Mit. Hey-day, what can this mean ?

Scout. Why, sir, the blows the plaintiff gave the poor fellow on his head, have affected his brain, and put him, as your worship sees, beside himself. He's to be trepan'd as soon as the court breaks up, and mr. Mincemeat the surgeon says, it is the whole materia medica to a dose of jalap, that he never recovers.

Snarl. Oh for the matter of that, it was a dark night ; and when ever I strike, I always strike home, and when and where I can.

Scout. There sir, he confesses the fact, a voluntary confession.

Mit Ay, ay, a voluntary confession ; release the prisoner, I find no cause of complaint against him.

[*exit* constables

Snarl. But I appeal—as to you, mr. Irongrey we shall meet. (*to* Scout)

Mit. O fie, mr. Snarl, you are much to blame.

Snarl. To blame, quotha ; one runs off with my cloth ; the other cuts the throat of my wethers : one pays me with Gomery, and the other with baa ;

yet after all I am to blame. As for you, mr. Justice—I'll appeal to a higher court; and that you shall find, mr. Wiseacre. [*exit*

Scout. (*to* Sheepface) Go thank his worship, go.

Sheep. Baa, baa.

Mit. Enough, enough! poor fellow, go and be trepanned directly; go. [*exit*

Sheep. Baa.

Scout. Well, I have brought you off with flying colors, you see; you are a man of your word I know; and I am sure you will pay me generously as you have promised me.

Sheep. Baa.

Scout. Yes, yes; you played your part very well, but that isn't the point now—my fee;—do you see—my fee.

Sheep. Baa.

Scout. What, am I to be outwitted by a walking scrubbing post? a two-legged bellwether? a——

Sheep. Baa.

Scout. So, I am outdone here, I find—but come, will you assist in bringing about my daughter's marriage. If the scheme succeeds, if you and your wife, my maid Kate, play your parts well I shall think myself sufficiently paid—if not, I'll show you what it is to attempt cheating a lawyer. But to your hiding-place, scoundrel, do you hear?

Sheep. Baa, baa. [*exit*

Scout. The devil baa you: but come, his worship seems so persuaded of the fellow's dangerous situation that it will be no hard matter to persuade him he's at the point of death: but here he comes,

and Kate along with him. The work's begun I see; I must stay and lend a hand.

enter MITTIMUS *and* KATE.

Mit. Poor fellow! dead do you say, and so suddenly too?

Kate. Yes—ye—es, sir.—Oh, oh! o dear. (*crying*)

Scout. Poor wench!——an ugly affair this for mr. Snarl.

Mit. Dont weep so, child; I'll see justice done you.

Kate. Oh! my husband! my poor dear husband! oh, oh, oh oh!

Mit. Nay, be comforted; consider you were married yesterday morning, and——

Kate. Ay, that's the reason; had he lived a day or two longer it would have been some con-so-la-ti-on, oh, oh, oh!

Mit. The murderer shall be punished; I have given the necessary orders already, and you shall shortly have the comfort of seeing him hanged.

Scout. Hanged! poor neighbor Snarl! so valuable a member of the community too. He'll be a public loss, neighbor Mittimus; a public loss!

Mit. True, he was a useful man in the country, but what can I do; here's a man murdered; and his widow demands justice.

Scout. But what service would it be to you, Kate, to have mr. Snarl hanged—would it not be better to——

Kate. Why, sir, I am not revengeful, and if

there was any friendly way of making up matters, you know how I love your worship's god-daughter.

Mit. My god-daughter! what concern has she in this affair?

Kate. Why an' please your worship, Charles, mr. Snarl's only son is in love with miss Harriet, your worship's god-daughter; but mr. Snarl won't consent to the marriage. Now your worship is a man of learning, and if you set about it, I am sure might contrive something to please all parties.

Mit. I have it. We'll hush matters up on condition that mr. Snarl consents to the match; but neighbor Scout, do you consent?

Scout. Why I had no intention of marrying my daughter yet; but to save mr. Snarl from being hanged, come, I consent.

Mit. They are bringing him this way, I see; leave us together.

Scout. I'll but just fill up the blanks of a *bond*, which you'll oblige him to sign; otherwise he might retract you know. [*exit* Scout *and* Kate

enter SNARL *and* CONSTABLES.

Mit. Well, neighbor Snarl, the poor wretch you beat, they say is dead; and you confessed the fact you know.

Snarl. I did; a blister on my tongue for it.

Mit. The law must take its course; but first let me know whether you would rather be hanged, or consent to your son's wedding.

Snarl. Neither one, nor t'other.

Mit. Lawyer Scout has a daughter, beautiful,

and well accomplished, and your son is in love with her.

Snarl. What's that to me?

Mit. Now matters might be hush'd up, if you consent to their marriage.

Snarl. I'll be hanged first.

Mit. Away with him to prison then.

Snarl. Hold, hold! I'll consent.

enter SCOUT *and* CHARLES.

Scout. Here's a bond ready for signing, and mr. Snarl if any of my family can be of service to you, in your present misfortune, you may command me.

Snarl. Eh, what do you want another four yards of cloth, rascal?——but come, give me this bond. There. *(signs it)*

Mit. Come, Charles, you and I will be witnesses.—So you have had a fortunate escape, neighbor Snarl, I wish you joy of your good luck.

Snarl. Yes, this has been a lucky day for me, truly.

enter two COUNTRYMEN *dragging in* SHEEPFACE.

Coun Bring him along.

Sheep. Mercy, good folks!

Mit. Whence comes this ghost?

Coun. Why, a'nt please your worship, we found this fellow hid under a heap of barley in our barn, so we brought him before your worship, to make him give an account of himself.

Mit. What's become of the blows your master gave you on the head?

Sheep. Gone along with his fourteen wethers.

Snarl. What, rascal, you are not dead then?

Sheep. Baa.

Snarl. Let me come at him; I have paid for the killing, and it is but fair, I should have the worth of my money; so if I am not allowed to choak him I retract the consent I gave.

Scout. With all my heart; so you may pay the penalty of your bond, which is two thousand guineas.

Snarl. Two thousand devils!—but come, joking apart, you'll pay me the fifty pounds your father owed mine?

Scout. Yes, when you can produce me his note.

Snarl. Mercy upon me! but then my four yards of cloth.

Scout. I'll wear them at your son's wedding.

Snarl. Well, at any rate, give me my share of the goose.

Scout. It flew back this morning to Norfolk.

Snarl. Then this rascal shall pay for all, and I'll begin by having him hanged.

Char. 'Tis time I own the truth, father; he has done nothing but by my direction, and to supply my necessities, therefore suffer me to meet your future indulgence by the means of conquering all such temptations henceforward.

Snarl. Hem '—well, it must be so then, I think; and to prevent any future abuse, I'll sell off all my sheep, and then they'll neither die of the rot, nor shall I need a shepherd.

Scout. Well, so far have I succeeded fully both for myself and client; but a cause in which we are all interested remains yet to be determined; which

we must learn from the decision of this tribunal, whether the *Village Lawyer* is to be struck off the *roll*, or not.

END OF THE VILLAGE LAWYER.

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